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**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AWARDS \$750,000 GRANT
TO CHARLOTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
TO HIRE NEW DEPUTIES**

United States Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today that the Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has awarded the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office a \$750,000 grant through the COPS In Schools program which funds the hiring of community policing officers assigned to schools. The grant will fund six full time deputies and provide a maximum of \$125,000 for the salary and benefits of each new officer over three years. COPS also provides school safety training for the officer and an administrator from the school where the officer will be assigned.

"Keeping our schools safe must be a top priority and we are pleased that federal money is being directed toward keeping our children out of harm's way," stated Mr. Perez.

Charlotte County Sheriff William E. Clement has indicated he plans to put three of the SROs in Charlotte County High Schools and the other three in elementary schools.

"We are extremely happy that we can now build an even stronger relationship with the youth in Charlotte County. My goal is ensure we have positive law enforcement contact with the young people in our schools," said Sheriff Clement.

Many communities are discovering that trained, sworn law enforcement officers assigned to schools make a difference. School Resource Officers (SROs) perform a variety of functions within the school including teaching crime prevention and substance abuse classes, monitoring troubled students, and building respect between law enforcement and education.

“We’re very pleased that SROs are having a positive impact on schools, students, and communities nationwide,” said COPS Director Carl R. Peed.

The grants announced this week total \$52.7 million and add 464 additional law enforcement officers to walk beats in our nation’s schools. These grants are being awarded to 228 agencies in 38 states and Puerto Rico. Including these recent grants, the COPS in Schools program has provided more than \$562 million to fund and train over 4,987 SROs.